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THEOLOGICAL UNIVERSITIES AND THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITIES.

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FOR some time now theological seminaries have been between the upper and nether millstones of criticism. "The Bible student" grinds them as too scholastic; the "university man," for lacking the spirit of research. Just now they are suffering for being too scholastic, or because Presidents Hyde, Harper, and Slocum, and a hundred others who have taken up President Hyde's hue and cry, think so. At the same time, however, there is, on the other hand, a good deal of quiet, if not contemptuous, criticism in the universities of the alleged failure of the seminaries to keep pace in scientific research, not merely with biology and the natural sciences, but even with secular history and philosophy.

Now, it seems clear that the same institution cannot at the same time be too learned and not learned enough, providing that institution has a single and definite aim, and it may prove that the real trouble has been the failure of the seminaries to keep to the single aim, and the assumption by them of three different aims, so that they have tried to ride three horses at once. The training of lay workers, the training of the ministry, and the training for teaching and research are three distinct things. Of late years there has been some growing perception of this fact, on the under side at least, and the situation has been cleared in part by the establishment of training schools for the Y. M. C. A., Bible training schools, and schools for lay workers. It used to be hard for the seminary to reject the pious youth anxious to give his life to direct service for his Master, but not up to the mark in Greek and history. The public clamor, voiced by synods, conferences, and councils, called for English courses and what not; and the seminaries tried to respond, with a good deal of consequent degradation of standard and loss in the quality of training which fits for real leadership. Now the seminary can reject these men in good conscience. On the other hand, there has been strong and constant pressure brought to bear upon the seminaries by men who have come in contact with the keen demands of modern scholarship, for the very best research work equal to the severely critical tests to which such

work is now subjected. To this also the seminary has tried to respond, with the result that "Assyriology" is one of the reproaches cast at the seminary by the present-day critics.

It ill becomes the universities to reproach the seminaries with lack of provision for graduate work; for this is not, in fact, the business of the seminaries, but of the universities themselves; and if theological science is behind biological science, it is a reproach, not to the seminary, but to the university. By the same token, too, it is not wholly graceful for our college presidents to reproach the seminaries with the fact, if fact it be, that the attempting of this task hampers more or less their main work. For this work is work which must be done, and through the fault of the universities there is no one else to do it.

It should be said in passing, what is perhaps obvious enough, that the actual unfitness of present theological instruction has certainly been exaggerated, and if not wholly untrue in respect to some institutions, the criticism has been utterly unjust as regards others. Everyone who has known the theological seminaries for twenty years past, and especially one who has known them ten years from the inside and ten years as an outsider, knows that in some of them at least there is the most faithful, energetic, and even enthusiastic effort to meet in every possible way the real demands of the time. All these demands for more instruction in the Bible, more sociology, and the like, and all legitimate criticisms, get a warm and sympathetic response. It is perhaps this very attempt of the seminaries to respond to the demands which has led to the present situation.

The triple aim has naturally resulted in missing more or less widely all three targets, and it may be that the real secret of reform is not a little more of philosophy, the Bible, and sociology, or even the consolidation of seminaries as proposed by President Slocum, but in distinguishing the training of teachers and special scholars clearly from the teaching of the ministry. As a matter of fact, the constructive criticisms of theological education have tended rather toward the further confusion of the seminary aim than toward simplification. Articles like those of President Harper and President Slocum in effect insist upon and amplify the triple task.

It is, of course, not impossible that this triple task should be performed by the same institution, but in this case the institution becomes, not a seminary, but a university with three well-defined departments. This is perhaps what Presidents Hall and Hartranft have been feeling after in their talk of "theological universities;" and yet it does not

appear that even at Union and Hartford there is any very clear differentiation of function. The state of things is almost exactly, up to a certain point, that from which the colleges have been trying to shake themselves free—the commingling of preparatory school and graduate work with the strictly undergraduate work; and the clearing of the lines would undoubtedly help the problem precisely as it is helping it in the universities.

As has been said, the matter is tending to solve itself on the lay side, and at the other extreme there are two solutions: one, the resolution of the seminary itself into clearly defined departments of ministerial and graduate training; the other, the assumption by the university of its own proper task, and the corresponding abdication of this task by the seminary.

Until the universities relegate biology and psychology to the medical schools they have no right to relegate theology to the seminaries. Sectarianism is no excuse for evasion, since biological and psychological sectarianism at the present moment is more virulent than denominationalism. The fact that a university is undenominational is a positive advantage for theology as well as for anything else; for the best man can be chosen irrespective of whether he is a Presbyterian or an Episcopalian, a Baptist or a Roman Catholic. On the university side, the plea of sectarianism is a mere pretext to escape responsibility.

But if the difficulty comes from the denominations, that they will not trust their peculiar possessions in the way of doctrine out of their denominational schools, and must guard against false doctrine even in the collation of a manuscript, then the burden is upon them to untangle the graduate from the seminary work and to establish clean-cut courses for such work. This extensive work of practically establishing new universities might perhaps be made feasible along the line of the suggestion of President Slocum for a union of seminaries. In the case of these New England Congregational seminaries, to which he refers, there are serious legal difficulties, it is understood, in the way of their local removal; but they might surely be federated for graduate work, either by assigning this work to some one institution, or by each separating a certain number of lines of graduate work, supplementing rather than duplicating one another, and encouraging migration of students in postgraduate work.

This might perhaps be done even better, however, through the affiliation of seminaries of all denominations with a university, on the

basis of having each seminary conduct only strictly ministerial courses, while all graduate courses are assumed by the university. Under this plan even the professors of systematic theology and of ecclesiastical polity in the university might be of any denomination; for if the postgraduate student wanted a certain general phase of doctrine which was found at Yale and not at Harvard, he would simply go to Yale, and *vice versa*; and if he wished to get all the denominational phases, he would take his main residence at one university and take the regular ministerial course, in his specialty, for a term or two at a representative of each of the denominational schools.

A great advantage of affiliation with the university would be that it might clear theological training from another of the causes of confusion, that is, the study of Hebrew and Greek. One may not for a moment entertain the idea of giving up Hebrew and Greek as a necessary part of ministerial training. With the multiplication of college graduates in these days, it is idle to expect that the keener minds of a congregation will retain their respect for leadership which is not able to verify its own authorities. It is quite in the line, however, of present university and college development that the university should furnish sufficiently rigid courses both in Hebrew and in Hellenistic Greek, as well as in the English Bible, history, and the elements of church history, so that a year's work of the seminary could be wholly done in the college. In spite of the rather futile results of this kind of teaching in the universities at the present time, it is nevertheless entirely conceivable that with closer discrimination and coöperation the seminary might organize its courses so that the men who have taken these courses in colleges should be admitted to the second year of the seminary, and the junior year be maintained simply as a sort of preparatory school. In the case of seminaries directly affiliated with universities, this year might then be dropped altogether from the seminary organization. There would, therefore, be two years left to do the work of theological preparation, and if any minister wanted special work after that time he would take it after, and only after, having finished the work of two years' ministerial training. These years would be devoted as exclusively to training for the practical ministry, whether a man is going to be a minister or teacher, as the years of a medical or law school are to the study of medicine or law.

It should in justice be said, after what has been remarked about the failure of the universities, that the failure is partial, not complete, as regards many lines, as witness Professor Robinson's paper on

the teaching of church history in the universities (entitled "Sacred and Profane History") at the Boston meeting of the American Historical Association. It is also true that many branches, such as Christian antiquities, comparative religion, the oriental languages, etc., are already taught in the universities; and it is probably safe to say that it is only necessary for the seminaries to surrender such fields to the universities in order to have proper and effective work in all the branches in the encyclopædia before any very remote time.